



Language Standards

The language standard variables are used to measure language diversity and usage in Australia

Reference period 2016

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On this page

[Summary](#)

[First language spoken](#)

[Languages spoken at home](#)

[Main language other than English spoken at home](#)

[Main language spoken at home](#)

[Proficiency in spoken English](#)

[Abbreviations](#)

[History of changes](#)

Summary

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) language standards codify methods for collecting, processing and presenting quality data on languages spoken in Australia. The ABS recommends these standards be used in all ABS and non-ABS collections where information on languages spoken is needed. There are five language standards:

- First Language Spoken
- Languages Spoken at Home
- Main Language Other Than English Spoken at Home
- Main Language Spoken at Home, and
- Proficiency in Spoken English.

First language spoken

Background

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has developed standards for a number of language variables for use when collecting language data.

The First Language Spoken variable codifies the concept, definitions and methods recommended by the ABS for collecting, processing and presenting quality statistics on the the first language a person could understand and speak. The First Language Spoken variable includes sign languages.

Data relating to First Language Spoken contributes to understanding proficiency in spoken English, which may be an indicator of ability to participate effectively in Australian society, including accessing government and other services.

Introduction

Collection of variable data

Processing the data

Presenting the data

Appendix A - explanatory script

Languages spoken at home

Background

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has developed standards for a number of language variables for use when collecting language data.

The Languages Spoken at Home variable codifies the concept, definitions, and methods recommended by the ABS for collecting, processing and presenting quality statistics on all languages spoken by a person at home. The variable includes sign languages.

Data relating to Languages Spoken at Home contributes to understanding proficiency in spoken English, which may be an indicator of ability to participate effectively in Australian society, including accessing government and other services.

Introduction

Collection of variable data

Processing the data

Presenting the data

Appendix A - explanatory script

Main language other than English spoken at home

Background

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has developed standards for a number of language variables for use when collecting language data.

The Main Language Other Than English Spoken at Home variable codifies the concept, definitions and methods recommended by the ABS for collecting, processing and presenting quality statistics on the main language, other than English, which is spoken by a person at home. The variable includes sign languages.

Data relating to Main Language Other Than English Spoken at Home contribute to understanding proficiency in spoken English, which may be an indicator of ability to participate effectively in Australian society, including accessing government and other services.

Introduction

Collection of variable data

Processing the data

Presenting the data

Appendix A - explanatory script

Main language spoken at home

Background

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has developed standards for a number of language variables for use when collecting language data.

The Main Language Spoken at Home variable codifies the concept, definitions and methods recommended by the ABS for collecting, processing and presenting quality statistics on the language often spoken by a person at home. The Main Language Spoken at Home variable

includes sign languages.

Data relating to Main Language Spoken at Home contribute to understanding proficiency in spoken English, which may be an indicator of ability to participate effectively in Australian society, including accessing government and other services.

Introduction

Collection of variable data

Processing the data

Presenting the data

Appendix A - explanatory script

Proficiency in spoken English

Background

The Australian Bureau of Statistics (ABS) has developed standards for a number of language variables for use when collecting language data.

Australia's main language is English. However, in 2011, nearly one in five Australians over the age of five spoke a language other than English at home.

The Proficiency in Spoken English variable is used to measure a person's self-assessed ability to speak English. The variable applies to people:

- whose first language spoken is a language other than English, or
- who speak a language other than English at home.

The language a person can speak may be an important part of their culture, identity and well-being. However, for people living in Australia a lack of proficiency in spoken English may impact a person's access to employment, education and other government and non-government services.

Introduction

Collection of variable data

Processing the data

[Presenting the data](#)

[Appendix A - explanatory script](#)

Abbreviations

[Show all](#)

History of changes

[Show all](#)

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